



# WA Veterans Home Construction Project



**240-bed skilled nursing facility at the Washington Veterans Home at Retsil**

The estimated capital cost for the new skilled nursing facility at Retsil is \$47.8 million. The state has provided \$16.7 million and the Federal VA is providing a 65 percent match.

This construction project is supported by the Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC), the Veterans Legislative Coalition (VLC) and the major Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) in the state – such as the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, Vietnam Veterans of America, American Veterans, American Ex-POWs and the National Association for Black Veterans.

**T**here are currently 670,000 veterans living in Washington state. Over the next 20 years, the number of veterans aged 65 and over is expected to increase by 20,000; those 85 and over will increase by 226 percent; and the number of Vietnam-era veterans will comprise nearly 40 percent of the overall veteran population.

A 1998 Service Delivery & Capital Planning Feasibility Study found the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) must invest in new nursing care facilities at the state veterans homes in order to meet earthquake standards and life-safety requirements.

WDVA proposed a Statewide Master Plan addressing the long-term care needs for Washington State's veterans. The 2001 Washington State Legislature provided \$16.7 million dollars allowing WDVA to apply for the 65% match from the Federal VA. The match was approved in December 2001 and WDVA began work on facility design.

The Construction Team defined the characteristics of desired programs and other nursing facilities that drove the entire design process. The Design Precepts are:

- ◆ Create a state-of-the-art facility
- ◆ Provide a non-institutional facility that fosters aging in place.
- ◆ Balance respect for privacy with need for socialization
- ◆ Design outdoor spaces that enhance the quality of life for residents and staff
- ◆ Build a facility that attracts and retains staff.

Governor Gary Locke and Secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Anthony J. Principi – along with several hundred Veterans Home residents, staff and State Veteran Leaders – participated in the official groundbreaking on May 16, 2003. A Grand Opening is being planned for March 2005.

WDVA is pursuing Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED Certification, for the project. WDVA and the Architect & Engineering Firm, NBBJ, have included numerous items that contribute to the future sustainability of the facility and utilize environmentally friendly building practices. These include:

- ◆ A Natural Ventilation Process.
- ◆ Utilization of reclaimed water for irrigation needs.
- ◆ Selection of materials from natural locally manufactured products.
- ◆ Buildings designed to fit site and minimize excavation, excavated soil was re-used as infill.
- ◆ Use of recycled building materials, including recycled steel.

## Room Layout



- Shared rooms are divided by a solid wall, rather than traditional curtains.
- Each resident has a window that opens.
- Rooms are carpeted, creating a more home-like environment.
- Residents live in “neighborhoods”, sharing common dining and gathering areas. Outdoor courtyards between neighborhoods serve as extensions of resident living areas, offering residents the option of enjoying the outdoors.

## Economics of State Veterans Homes

For every dollar WDVA spends on providing care in the homes, it collects three federal/local dollars. Conversely, veterans not receiving care in a state veterans home cost the state – and their families – *more* money in other community settings.

## Construction Partners

Project Management: Dept of General Administration  
 Architect & Engineering: NBBJ  
 General Contractor/Construction Manager: M.A. Mortenson Company



Washington Veterans Home New Dining Facility